



# TO YOUR HEALTH

WELCOA'S ONLINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN

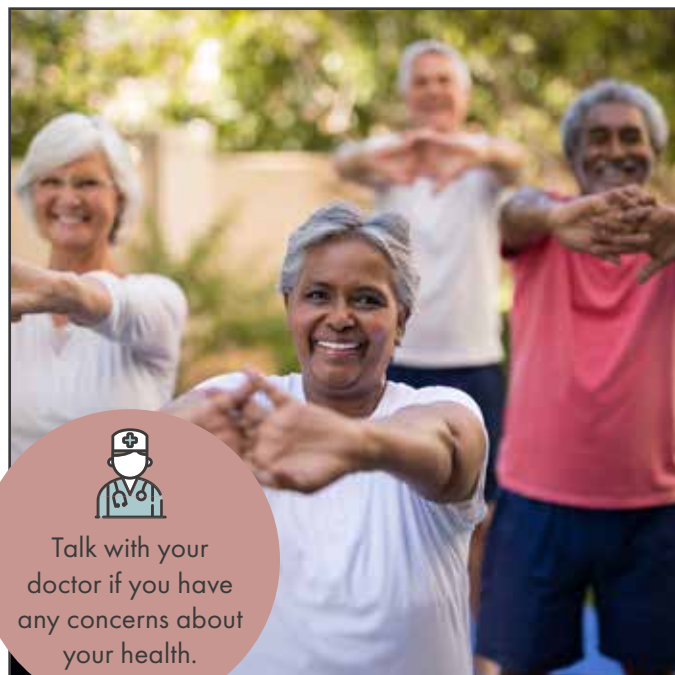
## Mix in More than Cardio!

### THE BENEFITS OF BALANCE, STRETCHING, & STRENGTH TRAINING

When you hear the word ‘exercise,’ you might think of going for a walk or run or hopping on a bicycle. These are indeed forms of exercise and are classified as endurance or cardiovascular exercise. They can keep your heart and lungs in good shape and help prevent many chronic diseases. But exercises to maintain flexibility, balance, and strength are also important:

- » Stretching gives you more freedom of movement and makes daily activities more comfortable.
- » Balance practice helps prevent falls, which become a concern as you get older.
- » Strength training, also called resistance training or weight training, is particularly important. It brings many benefits, including making your muscles stronger, which can help you keep up the activities you enjoy—at any stage of your life.

At all stages of life maintaining muscle mass and muscle function is really important for quality of life. Building muscle can do more than make you stronger. Some types of strength training keep your bones healthy, too. Strength training can also improve the way your body processes food to help prevent diabetes and related diseases. And like endurance activity, regular strength training is associated with lower risk of cardiovascular disease and other chronic diseases.



Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.

But the main benefit of strength training, as the name suggests, is that it makes your muscle cells stronger. Experts recommend that children and teens do muscle-strengthening activities at least three days a week. For adults, they encourage strength training for the major muscle groups on two or more days a week.

The benefits of strength training increase as you get older. Maintaining strength is essential for healthy aging because loss of muscle with aging can limit people's ability to function in their home environment and live independently. Just being able to get up out of a chair or go up and down stairs requires a fair amount of muscle strength.

### READY TO START?

If you want to get started with strengthening exercises, what should you do? Strength training may seem intimidating if you've never tried it. If it's feasible for you, booking a few sessions with a personal trainer or

watching some weight lifting techniques online is a good way to get started. That can get you introduced to the types of exercises you could do.

Like with any new activity, to make strength training stick, you have to find something that you really like to do. You may prefer class settings or you may like doing all your exercises in your home, by yourself. Experiment, discover what works for you, and make every effort to stick to it.

If you've never lifted weights before, talk with your health care provider before you start any home-based strength training routine. Whatever you choose to do, start slowly and build up very gradually.

### GET STARTED BUILDING MUSCLE SAFELY BY FOLLOWING THESE TIPS:

- » Start slowly, especially if you haven't been active for a long time. Little by little, build up your activities in both time and intensity
- » Pay attention to your body. Exhaustion, sore joints, or extreme muscle pain may mean you're overdoing it.
- » Use small amounts of weight to start. Focus on your form, and add more weight slowly, over time.
- » Use smooth, steady movements to lift weights into position. Don't jerk or thrust weights.
- » Avoid "locking" your arm and leg joints in a straight position.
- » Don't hold your breath during strength exercises. That could cause changes in your blood pressure. Breathe out as you lift the weights and breathe in as you relax.
- » Ask for help. To get started, schedule a session or two with a personal trainer, or look for a group class at a local gym, recreation center, or senior center.

